

535
5
/ 1

72137
2143125

NO PLAYS EXCHANGED.

BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

A Majority of One



WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
BOSTON

COPYRIGHT, 1898, BY WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

Plays for Amateur Theatricals.

BY GEORGE M. BAKER.

Author of "Amateur Dramas," "The Mimic Stage," "The Social Stage," "The Drawing-Room Stage," "Handy Dramas," "The Exhibition Dramas," "A Baker's Dozen," etc.

Titles in this Type are New Plays.

Titles in this Type are Temperance Plays.

DRAMAS.

In Four Acts

Better than Gold. 7 male, 4 female char. 25

In Three Acts.

Our Folks. 6 male, 5 female char. 15

The Flower of the Family. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

ENLISTED FOR THE WAR. 7 male, 3 female char. 15

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

The Little Brown Jug. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

In Two Acts.

Above the Clouds. 7 male, 3 female char. 15

One Hundred Years Ago. 7 male, 4 female char. 15

AMONG THE BREAKERS. 6 male, 4 female char. 15

BREAD ON THE WATERS. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

DOWN BY THE SEA. 6 male, 3 female char. 15

ONCE ON A TIME. 4 male, 2 female char. 15

The Last Loaf. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

In One Act.

STAND BY THE FLAG. 5 male char. 15

The Tempter. 3 male, 1 female char. 15

COMEDIES AND FARCES.

A Mysterious Disappearance. 4 male, 3 female char. 15

Paddle Your Own Canoe. 7 male 3 female char. 15

A Drop too Much. 4 male, 2 female char. 15

A Little More Cider. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

A THORN AMONG THE ROSES. 2 male, 6 female char. 15

NEVER SAY DIE. 3 male, 3 female char. 15

RINGING THE ELEPHANT. 6 male, 3 female char. 15

THE BOSTON DIP. 4 male, 3 female char. 15

THE DUCHESS OF DUBLIN. 6 male, 4 female char. 15

THIRTY MINUTES FOR REFRESHMENTS. 4 male, 3 female char. 15

We're all Teetotalers. 4 male, 2 female char. 15

Male Characters Only.

A CLOSE SHAVE. 6 char. 15

A PUBLIC BENEFACTOR. 6 char. 15

A SEA OF TROUBLE. 8 char. 15

COMEDIES, etc., continued.

Male Characters Only.

A TENDER ATTACHMENT. 7 char. 15

COALS OF FIRE. 6 char. 15

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. 8 char. 15

Shall Our Mothers Vote? 11 char. 15

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY. 12 char. 15

HUMORS OF THE STRIKE. 8 char. 15

MY UNCLE THE CAPTAIN. 6 char. 15

NEW BROOMS SWEEP CLEAN. 6 char. 15

THE GREAT ELIXIR. 9 char. 15

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC. 3 char. 15

The Man with the Demijohn. 4 char. 15

THE RUNAWAYS. 4 char. 15

THE THIEF OF TIME. 6 char. 15

WANTED, A MALE COOK. 4 char. 15

Female Characters Only.

A LOVE OF A BONNET. 5 char. 15

A PRECIOUS PICKLE. 6 char. 15

NO CURE NO PAY. 7 char. 15

THE CHAMPION OF HER SEX. 8 char. 15

THE GREATEST PLAGUE IN LIFE. 8 char. 15

THE GRECIAN BEND. 7 char. 15

THE RED CHIGNON. 6 char. 15

USING THE WEED. 7 char. 15

ALLEGORIES.

Arranged for Music and Tableaux.

LIGHTHART'S PILGRIMAGE. 8 female char. 15

THE REVOLT OF THE BEES. 9 female char. 15

THE SCULPTOR'S TRIUMPH. 1 male, 4 female char. 15

THE TOURNAMENT OF IDYLICOURT. 10 female char. 15

THE WAR OF THE ROSES. 8 female char. 15

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE. 8 female char. 15

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

AN ORIGINAL IDEA. 1 male, 1 female 15

BONBONS; OR, THE PAINT KING. 6 male, 1 female char. 15

CAPULETTA; OR, ROMEO AND JULIET RESTORED. 3 male, 1 female char. 15

SANTA CLAUS' FROLICS. 15

SNOW-BOUND; OR, ALONZO THE BRAVE AND THE FAIR IMOGENE. 4 male, 1 female char. 15

THE MERRY CHRISTMAS OF THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOULDER. 15

THE PEDLER OF VERY NICE. 5 male char. 15

THE SEVEN AGES. A Tallian Light Entertainment. Numerous male and female char. 15

TOO LATE FOR THE TRAIN. 2 male char. 15

THE VISION OF FREEDOM. 11 female char. 15

WALTER H. BAKER & CO., 23 Winter St., Boston.

A MAJORITY OF ONE

OR

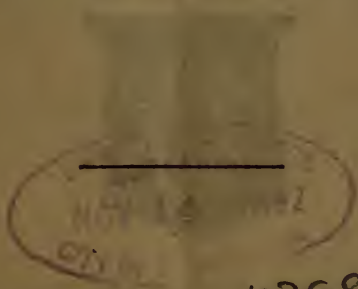
LOVE AND MUSHROOMS

A Farce in One Act

BY.

FRANCIS A. HARRIS, M.D.

FREELY ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN



43989 X¹

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

1892

PS 635
Z9 H3145

CHARACTERS.

TIMOTHY NORCROSS, *a retired grocer, and at this time a candidate for the Legislature.*

A. WARDHEELER *Manager of Norcross' campaign*

HENRY MASON *Nephew of the opposing candidate*

ALICE HALE *Niece of Norcross, just home from school*

MARY *Servant in hotel where Norcross boards*

COSTUMES, modern. TIME, the present day.



COPYRIGHT, 1892, BY WALTER H. BAKER & Co.

A MAJORITY OF ONE.

SCENE. — *A room of the country hotel of a New England village. The room is the public parlor, with doors opening on left numbered 3 and 4. Also doors at back. Open fireplace with logs not fired. Appropriate furniture.*

(*Enter from door L. NORCROSS and HEELER, the latter with his hat on.*)

HEELER. Now don't you fret your gizzard, Norcross. Everything is cut and dried. Your name is as sure to be on the roll of the next Legislature as mine is to be on my tombstone "*His Jacket*" (*mispronouncing*) "A. Ward Heeler."

NORCROSS (*with dignity*). Ah, Heeler, there is nothing sure in this world, nothing! Still, if my fellow-citizens shall deem me the person most worthy to protect their interests in the great and general court, and shall of their own accord elect me, unbiassed by any personal influence, and with no attempt at bribery—by the way, did you open that barrel of ale down at Goat Acre?

HEEL. To be sure I did. There wasn't a man that did not have a full-blown jag inside of an hour, and everybody was cheering for Norcross.

NOR. Well, Heeler, if there is one thing more than another that I reprobate, it is the abuse of intoxicating liquor; yet I am told that the gentle stimulation of malt beverages is not injurious.

HEEL. You won't find it injurious when it comes to voting, I can tell you.

NOR. I truly hope the ale will have no such effect as to make any man vote against his convictions of what is right—ahem!—what was I saying?—ah, yes—with no efforts at bribery, far be it from me to refuse the call of my country. Patriotism demands of every man any sacrifice, whether he be American by birth, or American by adoption—by the way—you got those Italians naturalized in time?

HEEL. Yes; and paid their poll-tax.

NOR. That's right, Heeler. See that no man is deprived of the right of suffrage by poverty alone. Yes, sir, even if I should be required to give up my comfortable room in this hotel, and should be asked to expatriate myself as a minister to a foreign power, patriotism would force me to it, Heeler; I feel sure it would.

HEEL. Ah, sir, your principles are well known.

NOR. I hope you have circulated my views on civil service, — no removals but for cause.

HEEL. But, sir —

NOR. Oh! you shall have the post-office. Your work for me would be cause enough for the removal of the other fellow; but (*for the first time observing HEELER'S hat, and beginning very quietly, and gradually working into a passion*), Heeler, allow me, in the mildest manner in the world, to inquire in, as I may say, the politest terms possible to a man of refinement and breeding, and a candidate for the general court, why you persist in keeping your infernal hat on your miserable old head? Take it off, sir; take it off. (*HEELER removes hat.*) There, sir, that is more respectful. I don't wish to be severe, but as a man swears at a mule, I must speak to you in a language that you understand.

HEEL. Yes, sir; certainly, sir. Excuse me. I forget sometimes. My head is so full of business. You have no idea of the amount of work I have put in in the last fortnight. What with seeing this man and interviewing that one; talking prohibition to the clergymen and license to rounders, — and, by the way, I had a hard job with the Methodists; your opponent is a member of that church, — and then the drinks on the sly here, there, and everywhere; I can hardly tell if I have a head on my shoulders, much less a hat on my head. If it had not been for patriotism and a post-office, I never could have done it — never. (*Puts his hat on again.*)

NOR. Then you think I have a sure thing?

HEEL. A good safe majority, believe me.

NOR. Good enough. I respect you, Heeler — (*noticing that HEELER has replaced his hat*) and speaking of respect, I am prompted in perfect good humor to remark that if you don't remove that confounded hat from your pate, I'll kick you out of the room, do you hear?

HEEL. (*removing hat*). Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Oh, I forgot, there is one thing that is working against you, though. The matter I mentioned last week.

NOR. What was that?

HEEL. (*embarrassed*). Why — er — I — well — the fact that you do not live with your wife.

NOR. (*quietly*). Oh, that? Eh?

HEEL. The opposition are making quite a handle of it. They say, sir, that such a state of things is highly immoral; that is (*putting on his hat*), it's quite awkward to talk about —

NOR. (*aside*). And a mighty sight more awkward just at the present time that it is a fact. (*Aloud.*) I've looked out for that. It's all provided for, and I'll see that it does me no harm.

HEEL. (*surprised*). Ah! have you indeed?

NOR. Yes. Now you go and — (*seeing hat*) and if you value my esteem, observe me when I say that if I see your gibbering old jaws capped with that beastly old tile in my presence, I'll knock

the stuffing out of you, even if it does the same to my canvass, hear me?

HEEL. (*taking off hat*). Yes, sir.

NOR. You just get it noised around now that this afternoon my wife and I are going to visit the high school together.

HEEL. But how is it possible?

NOR. That's my affair. Just you go and do as I say.

HEEL. That will be a good move. (*Going; puts on hat*.) I'll hurry. I say — couldn't you manage to take a few children along with you?

NOR. Children? What the deuce do I want of children?

HEEL. Why, important educational matters are to come before the next Legislature, and the people imagine that a man will take more interest in such matters if he has children of his own. Now Morse, your opponent, has two.

NOR. I do hate a liar, — that is on principle, — but you may say that I have two — no — make it three children — (*sees hat*) and with all the composure in the world, I venture to remark that I'll kick your miserable old carcass from here to the park, if you will persist in keeping that greasy old plug on your head another minute (*HEELER takes off hat. Quietly*) — three children, — Thomas, Richard, and Henry.

HEEL. If we only had them here. Oh, I fancy that Thomas, Richard, and Henry would have great influence with — with, well, Tom, Dick, and Harry.

NOR. You are laboring with a joke, Heeler. Don't do it! Having them here is out of the question. Just ask the people to overlook their inability to be in two places at the same time. Now go.

(*Exit HEELER, door C.*)

I respect the feelings of an enlightened and intelligent public, and I fully appreciate their careful inspection of the belongings of a candidate. But — children! What will the idiots want next? I've promised to go in for a new park and a new wall around the cemetery, though, as the lamented Jim Fiske said, I can't see what the use of that is. "Those that are in can't get out, and those that are out don't want to get in." However, I've promised *all* this, and *now* they want a wife and children. Good job they don't want them to be twins or triplets. Wife be hanged! or anything else unpleasant. I've lived altogether too comfortably since she took a notion to go West with my bookkeeper to wish her back. Still, I won't risk my election for a trifle like that. Luckily she ran away before I came to this town, and since nowadays seeming is as good as being, I've provided a way out of the wife question. Now —

(*Enter at C., MARY.*)

MARY. Excuse me, sir, there is a young lady inquiring for you.

NOR. (*turns quickly*). Aha! Show her in here.

MARY (*speaking out off stage*). Right this way. (*Exit.*)

NOR. Aha! Here she is—my wife, that is, by proxy; here comes the means to satisfy the free and enlightened public—and be hanged to them!

(*Enter C., ALICE, with wraps, satchel, etc., which she puts on table and then embraces NORCROSS.*)

ALICE. How do you do, uncle dear?

NOR. (*mysteriously*). Hush! Not so loud. Don't call me uncle.

ALICE (*astonished*). What!

NOR. I'll explain presently. Who came with you?

ALICE. Only an old lady who has relatives here.

NOR. Good enough! Well, my child, I sent to your boarding-school for you because I want you to render me an important service.

ALICE. Service? Ah, if you knew what a service has been rendered to me to-day! I haven't even now recovered from the excitement.

NOR. Ah? Well, never mind that. Now, my dear—

ALICE (*interrupting*). A young man who came in the coach with me—

NOR. Never mind the young man. Now the fact is—

ALICE. But I do mind him. He was a perfect gentleman—just too sweet to live—

NOR. That is not of the slightest consequence. Now I—

ALICE. Oh, and so brave! Only for him I should have been killed.

NOR. What! Killed?

ALICE. He saved my life.

NOR. Who?

ALICE. This nice young man.

NOR. Well, much obliged. I'll call on him and thank him in person. (*Aside.*) I don't see why a nice young man who goes about saving people's lives should turn up just now. It's very awkward. (*Aloud.*) Now, my child, you know that at some time you will be my heiress, will have all I possess, and to-day I want you to do me a small favor.

ALICE. A favor to you. Of course, dear uncle.

NOR. Hush! Don't call me uncle. When you marry, my dear, I'll give you a splendid outfit. But to-day you must do me a *trifling* favor.

ALICE. Well?

NOR. In the first place, you know you have three children.

ALICE (*springing back*). What!

NOR. (*quietly*). Three children, — Thomas, Richard, and Henry. All at present away at school.

ALICE. But, my dear uncle.

NOR. Great Scott! Will you stop calling me uncle! You are

my wife. (ALICE expresses bewilderment.) So you see, I can't be your uncle if I am your husband. You are simply your aunt, Mrs. Norcross.

ALICE. I don't understand it at all. (Weeping.) I can't be my own aunt.

NOR. (looking around hastily). Hush! Don't cry, or folks will think we don't live happily. Remember 'tis only for a day. To-morrow you shall be my niece again, as before.

ALICE (still crying). But why must I be my aunt?

(Enter C., MARY. Goes and gets glasses from sideboard; sees ALICE crying; exit shaking her head compassionately.)

NOR. That's my secret. It is enough for you to know that circumstances in which I am placed render it necessary. It is connected with important matters affecting the welfare of the country. So, above all things, keep your mouth shut. I'll do everything for your happiness hereafter, but until to-morrow don't say a word that you're not my wife. Do you understand? Not to any one.

ALICE. Well, I won't. It's a bargain, uncle.

NOR. (nervous). Hush! Don't say uncle. Did you bring your school report with you?

ALICE. Yes, uncle.

NOR. (anxious). Goodness gracious! will you quit that uncle! (ALICE in chair. NORCROSS on table.)

ALICE (aside). If I only could.

NOR. Call me Timothy. Your own Timothy. Try it once, just once — now — one, two, three.

ALICE (laughs). Yes, my own dear Timothy.

NOR. Capital! Capital! I declare if you keep that up you shall have a sealskin. Now let me see your report.

ALICE (getting paper from satchel and giving it). Here it is.

NOR. (reads). "Mathematics good. Geography good. History good. Language bad." What! Do you use bad language? Fie, Fie!

ALICE. No; that means foreign language, — French, etc.

NOR. Oho, I see. (Reads.) "Punishments" —

ALICE (nervous). Oh, dear! (ALICE at R. front, goes up and down.)

NOR. (reads). "March 5, twenty lines for making faces at the teacher." What's this? You make faces at the teacher? How disrespectful!

ALICE. I couldn't help it. She would make such a guy of herself. No girl could help making fun.

NOR. Oh! couldn't she? Guy was she? Now what did you do? Eh?

ALICE (nervous). Oh! I —

NOR. Come, come now, I want to see. Do it again.

ALICE. I don't want to —

NOR. I must see. Perhaps you were not punished enough.

ALICE (*putting her fingers to her nose*). That was all.

NOR. Ha! Ha! Twenty lines for that. Poor thing! (*Reads.*)
 "April 1, fifty lines for pinning a paper on the teacher's back."

ALICE. That was the fault of the day, unc — Timothy dear.

NOR. (*pleased*). So it was. April fool, eh? (*Reads.*) "April 10, one hundred lines for being caught reading a novel." (*Gravely.*)
 What! Do you read novels?

ALICE (*confused*). Oh, if he knew I had one in my satchel now!
 (*Aloud.*) Why, you see I was not punished for reading a novel.
 I was punished for being CAUGHT reading.

NOR. Ah! You are getting the world's philosophy early, my dear. It's always the way. We are only punished for being caught.
 (*Sternly; crosses.*) If I hear of your reading novels again I'll send you to a convent.

ALICE. Yes, uncle.

NOR. (*turns*). Confound it! can't you stop saying uncle?

ALICE. Yes, uncle.

NOR. (*stamps feet*). There you go again.

ALICE. I didn't mean to, Timothy.

(*Enter MARY.*)

MARY (*coming from ALICE'S room*). Your room is ready, Miss —

NOR. Miss? Miss? What's got into your head? This lady
 (*laying his hand on her arm tenderly*) is my wife, Mrs. Norcross.

MARY. Your wife? (*Aside.*) Aha! That accounts or their quarrelling as soon as they come together. (*Aloud to NORCROSS.*)
 Then you only want one room?

NOR. (*disconcerted; up and down*). Yes — Yes — we want two.
 (*Aside to MARY.*) My wife snores frightfully.

MARY. All right. Your wife can have that room next to yours.
 (*Pointing to No. 3.*)

NOR. That'll just suit.

MARY. Ah! what the folks say is true. This is an unhappy marriage.

NOR. Now, my dear duxy wuxy, go and change your things, and while my little dovey is dressing I'll look over my speech once more. In a quarter of an hour we will take a stroll up to the high school. I want you to see some of the people here — (*ALICE shuts off speech with her door. Aside*) and all of the people here to see you.

(*Exit NORCROSS into 4 as ALICE into 3.*)

MARY. All their hugging and their duxy wuxys don't fool me. They must lead a cat-and-dog life.

(*Enter C., HENRY MASON. Arms full, — satchel, umbrella, overcoat, etc.*)

HENRY (*mysteriously*). St — st — my dear, st —

MARY (*turns and sees him*). Ah, another traveller! What can I do for you, sir?

HENRY. My hands are full. Just see if you can find a quarter in my vest pocket. (MARY *feels in pocket, and it tickles HENRY so that he squirms.*) Oh! Ah!

MARY. What's the matter?

HENRY. You tickle me so.

MARY. Here's the quarter. (*Producing it.*)

HENRY. All right. Just hold onto it. Tell me, didn't two young ladies stop here just now? — one of them say about sixty.

MARY (*laughs*). Yes, sir, a *young* lady of *sixty* did stop here.

HENRY. You know what I mean. See if you can't find another quarter. (MARY *feels; same business.*)

MARY. Here it is.

HENRY. Just hold onto it, will you. Where is she now?

MARY. Who? The sixty?

HENRY. No. The other.

MARY (*pointing to No. 3*). She's in there in her room.

HENRY. Take me to her at once. (*Going towards 3.*)

MARY (*running in front of door*). No, sir; not if I know it. For shame, sir! she's dressing.

HENRY. What! You won't?

MARY. Not for the world.

HENRY. Have you got those quarters?

MARY. Yes.

HENRY. Then oblige me by putting them back into my vest pocket. (MARY *does it; same business of squirming.*)

MARY. There they be. Law, how ticklish you be!

HENRY. Now I want a room.

MARY. Very well, sir.

HENRY. And I — I am very thirsty. Do bring me a glass of beer.

MARY. Beer? Why this is a temperance house!

HENRY. *Temperance*, eh? Then bring me a whiskey punch, I —

MARY. What do you mean?

HENRY. Oh, I know these *temperance* hotels! There is plenty of drink to be had, only the quality is mighty bad and the price higher.

MARY. Really, sir, we do not keep any liquor.

HENRY. All right, then. Bring me a glass of milk. (*Significantly.*) *Milk*. Do you understand?

MARY. Directly, sir. (*Puts ALICE'S properties on chair; HENRY puts his on table; MARY at door.*) That's a queer sort of man anyway. (*Exit C.*)

HENRY. Then I shall see her again. By Jove! That's good luck. Ah! little did I think when Uncle Jonas Morse wrote to me to come home and vote for him at the coming election, what an

adventure I should have on the way. Little did I think when I started partially with the intention of offering my heart and my hand to my Cousin Nellie, that I should lose the heart aforesaid before I saw her. Yet Fate was in the way. Fate in the shape of a lumbering old coach, which contained besides myself two ladies, one of uncertain age, or rather of a confoundedly certain age, and the other an angel. I declare, the little feather on the back of her hat might have been the tip of one of her wings for all I know. Such a trim little figure! such lovely features! Eyes, heavenly; nose, heavenly, or at least with aspirations that way, for it was *turned up* just the least in the world; lips that looked like cherries. I wish I knew if they tasted like them, and a foot—such a foot! A good, stout little foot too, for she tried it. At the rise of a long hill the driver asked if we would get out and walk. The party of the first part, I mean the old lady, was asleep and snoring. I got out; the young woman got out too. We walked together, and she plucked flowers. I helped her till she had a whole handful of buttercups and daisies, and I nearly as many, when suddenly there broke through the bushes by the roadside an animal. “Oh, heavens!” she cried, “a wild bull!” I sprang forward to protect her, to save her at the risk of my own life, when the beast sidled up to me and tried to get the buttercups from my hand. It was only a playful calf, or rather a young steer, who wanted a nibble. Quite harmless and very good natured. I gave him the flowers and he walked away. When I looked for the angel, she lay in a swoon upon the ground. Presently she came to, and asked the usual questions as to her whereabouts, and finally remarked (*imitating*), “I remember now;” insisted on calling me her saviour, preserver, and things of that sort. Of course I did not object, and the rest of our trip was occupied by her in expressing her gratitude in the liveliest manner by words, looks, and in fact sighs. They say “Come weal, come woe;” with me it was, “Come *veal*, come joy.” We divided an orange, and she devoured my heart with every slice, while I devoured her with my eyes. Mighty sour too. I mean the slices, not the eyes. Heigho! Cousin Nellie, you’ve lost one chance for a husband. Uncle Jonas shall have my vote, but the call of kinship can go no farther, or at least no father-in-law.

(Enter ALICE from No. 3; costume slightly changed. At first she does not observe HENRY.)

HENRY (*aside*). There’s my angel. (*Takes up satchel and kisses it. Aloud.*) Miss, permit me.

ALICE (*startled*). Oh! My gracious! How you startled me! (*With feeling.*) Oh, my preserver!

HENRY. It strikes me that instead of *preserving* you, I really got you out of a *pickle*. (ALICE looks sober. *Aside.*) She does not see the joke. I thought it wasn’t *bad*. (*Aloud; with feeling.*) You left your satchel in the coach; I would have gladly kept it as a

souvenir of an occasion only too sweet and too short, when that lovely hair — (ALICE *takes one end of bag and crosses, and HENRY keeps the other end, as if to help her.*)

ALICE. My goodness! you haven't opened it, have you? That hair isn't mine. It's my aunt's — a new switch I bought her. It's a perfect match; you can't tell which is switch.

HENRY. Ha! Ha! Ha! very good. (ALICE *looks sober.*) Why, she didn't mean it. I thought it wasn't *bad*; I'll try. You say news which she sent for. Ah, the news which I would send for.

ALICE (*taking satchel*). You are too kind. Is it not odd that we meet so soon again?

HENRY. Odd? Even so. (ALICE *looks grave. Aside.*) She doesn't see that either. I thought it wasn't *bad*. (Aloud.) Yet not strange. How can the poor moth keep away from the flame that has once dazzled him? I am the moth; you are the flame — no, I mean candle — no, confound it! flame is the better word. (Aloud.) Yes, the flame.

ALICE. How complimentary you are!

HENRY. Ah, can I ever forget that ride, that orange we ate together!

ALICE (*naïve*). Yes, wasn't it sour? and so many seeds. But I, too, can never forget that to you I owe my life.

HENRY. Oh! That calf!

ALICE. What?

HENRY. I say that calf — never imagined that when he grew to be a raving bull he would cause me so much —

ALICE. Pain? Did he then hurt you?

HENRY. Pain? Yes; that is — no, joy. He shot me through the heart. (Aloud.) What an ass I am making of myself!

ALICE. The bull shot you through the heart?

HENRY. No; I mean he ought to be shot through the calf — I mean heart. (*Wiping his forehead.*)

ALICE (*feelingly*). And you risked your life for me!

HENRY (*aside*). O blessed calf! (Aloud.) I beg you'll say no more about it. Really, you embarrass me, Miss! I believe frankness is the best. I am blunt, but truthful. I — I — love you — love you more than tongue can tell.

ALICE. Oh, my! how you do talk! Yet the assistance you gave me — your courage —

HENRY. Always thinking of that calf — I mean bull. The fact is, I am always making a bull about that calf. (ALICE *smiles. Aside.*) Ah! she does see that; I thought it wasn't *bad*. (Aloud.) Let's say no more about my service. Truly my intentions are most honorable. I have asked you to marry me after full consideration. My name is Henry Mason, and — now — what do you say?

ALICE. I certainly owe you a debt of gratitude, but still I am not exactly free to decide. I am not yet of age — and — and — then I hardly know you —

HENRY. Then let me ask the consent of your relatives. As I say, my name is Henry Mason; I have a good home and two thousand a year. Every one here knows me. My property is here. My relatives are here. Indeed, that's why *I* am here now, — to vote in the election that is going on.

ALICE (*at a loss*). Well, really —

(*Enter from 4, NORCROSS, manuscript in hand.*)

NOR. Are you ready, my love?

ALICE (*aside*). Oh, dear! I forgot all about uncle.

HENRY (*aside*). Ah! The papa, that's evident. Now to get his consent.

NOR. (*aside to ALICE*). Who is this gentleman?

ALICE (*confused*). Oh! He — he — he's a very influential citizen here.

NOR. (*aside, taking off hat*). By Jove! suppose I try the effect of my speech. (*Puts on his glasses. HENRY and NORCROSS approach each other, one with head up and the other down, and, striking an attitude, both speak at the same time.*)

ALICE. (*aside*). What are they going to do?

HENRY. Respected sir, not without diffidence do I venture —

NOR. Sir, on an occasion like the present — (*Both stop and look at each other, then repeat as before.*)

HENRY. Respected sir, not without diffidence do I venture —

NOR. Sir, on an occasion like the present — (*Both stop.*)

NOR. (*with dignity, referring to his manuscript*). On an occasion like the present, when the country expects every man to do his duty, I have resolved to sacrifice my temporary comfort to my country's call. I am a self-made man; I lay no claim to the advantages which others may have, but I do profess to have an honest heart, a heart entirely devoted to the welfare of the commonwealth.

HENRY (*aside*). What the devil is all this?

NOR. And especially at this particular time, to this particular deestrick, and I shall consider that its claims are paramount to any selfish considerations. I am more than happy now, and with a wife whom I worship, with three darling children, — Thomas, Richard, and James (*referring to MS.*), I mean Henry, now unfortunately away at school, I might well refuse the honor of an election to the Legislature and — (*looks at MS. some time; confused.*)

HENRY (*aside*). Jupiter! He's the opponent of Uncle Jonas in the election.

NOR. (*finds place*). Legislature. But, sir, wife and children must give way before the call of duty, and — (*Looks at MS.*)

HENRY. Respected sir, not without diffidence do I venture —

NOR. (*raising voice*). And — and honor, — duty and honor. I would not wish to influence your vote against your will, still I must ask the careful consideration of the claims of one who can conscientiously say "*Homo sum.*" Yes, sir, "*Homo sum.*" I boast

not. I am a plain, blunt man, and I speak the truth. (*Lays speech on chimney-piece.*)

HENRY. So I see. The whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me, Moses! (*Aside.*) Ah, Uncie Jonas, I fear I can't help you now. My vote must go to my prospective father-in-law. (*Aloud.*) I respect your sentiments. You shall have my vote.

NOR. (*shaking his hand*). I thank you, sir. In these times every man must go in for the Union —

HENRY. Union? Yes, sir; and therefore allow me to say (*strikes attitude*), respected sir, not without diffidence do I venture —

NOR. (*interrupting*). Excuse me, sir; excuse me, my dear sir; I have very important business to attend to. Come along, my darling. (*Stops.*) Oh, stay! Allow me, my dear sir, to introduce to you my wife —

HENRY (*astounded*). Wife?

NOR. Mrs. Norcross as is, Miss Hale as was.

ALICE (*aside*). But, dear uncle.

NOR. Hush! Call me Timothy. (*Gives his arm.*) Good-morning, good-morning.

(*Exeunt ALICE and NORCROSS C.*)

HENRY (*gazing after them blankly*). His wife! Can it be that she is married? And yet she gave me encouragement, actually seemed fond of me, and she a married woman. (*Reflecting.*) Ah, I see — it was an electioneering trick. She was using her "influence." Letting me make love to her. And she with three children. Well, it won't work. My vote goes to Uncle Jonas. And I listened to his drivel, his speech, ass that I was! Confound that calf! I wish I had never seen it. Yet, I do love her. One can't shake off love so easily when once it has possession. That orange — damn the orange! it certainly was sour; at all events these *grapes* are, and most decidedly forbidden fruit. (*Goes to window.*) There she goes. Jove! she is looking back at this window, too.

(*Enter MARY with milk.*)

MARY. Here's your milk, sir.

HENRY (*taking it*). All right. Now to drown my sorrows in the sparkling cup. (*Tastes it.*) Why, confound it, it *is* milk!

MARY. Yes, sir, mostly milk. They do say our milkman do rinse his cans very freely.

HENRY (*giving it back to her*). Well, put it down; I'm sure I can't put it down, and when you put it down, chalk it up; no doubt it's chalked up enough already. I mean put it in my bill. (*MARY puts it on chimney-piece; about to go.*) Wait — see here, my dear.

MARY (*coming back*). Well, sir, what is it?

HENRY. Do you know the gentleman who just went out?

MARY (*sighing*). Him? Dear, dear, yes.

HENRY. Dear? dear? why dear, dear, my dear?

MARY. I sigh to think how unhappy they are.

HENRY. Unhappy? Is she unhappy? How do you know?

MARY. Hush! I mustn't talk about it. Servants mustn't be gossips. But folks will talk. Oh, such a life as they live! Most always apart.

HENRY. Nothing so dreadful in that.

MARY. No, perhaps not, when you consider that she snores frightfully.

HENRY. Snore? My angel — I mean *his* angel snores?

MARY. Yes; and they quarrel so when they are together! They had hardly met this morning when they began.

HENRY. To quarrel? Tell me, tell me.

MARY. I don't know what it was. But I heard something about a sealskin. He was angry. She cried. He stamped his feet. She did also. Goodness knows he's a brute — that old chap; I should not blame her if she wished he was — (*Indicating under the sod.*)

HENRY. Well, well, — was what?

MARY. Well, that he was put on ice to cool off. (*Laughs.*)

HENRY (*taking his traps*). Pshaw!

(*Exit MARY, laughing.*)

Heavens, what a world! The woman I love unhappy. Her husband a brute. The devil tempts me. No; get thee behind me, a good ways behind me, you imp of darkness. It shall be my cousin after all. I will go and throw myself at her feet.

(*Enter C., ALICE.*)

ALICE (*aside*). He is still here. How dreadful that he thinks I am married, and I can say nothing to undeceive him, nothing till to-morrow.

HENRY (*seeing her; aside*). Three children, — Thomas, Richard, and James, — all away at school. (*Gesture of despair.*)

ALICE. He does not speak to me. He is angry. (*Coughs.*)

HENRY (*aside*). She coughs — yet somehow she does not look consumptive; I don't know why, but she don't. (*Turns.*) Ah, Mrs. Norcross, so soon returned?

ALICE. Dear, me! how you startled me!

HENRY. Madam, why did you deceive me? Why did you allow the tendrils of love to twine about my calf — I mean my heart. Why did you not say, *stay*, sir, I have a husband and more or less children? Had you said *stay*, I would have gone; that is, I mean I never would have gone — on to say what I did say, when you did not say *stay* — (*Confused.*)

ALICE. Oh! if you only knew —

HENRY. Knew? Knew what, Mrs. Norcross?

ALICE (*aside*). "Mrs. Norcross." How fearfully horrid to be called Mrs. Norcross!

HENRY. For your sake I abandoned a lovely girl, a girl with light blue hair and golden eyes, I mean — never mind what I mean. It is not yet too late; I will go to her and ask her to love me once more.

ALICE. No, no. Don't go to her. Don't beg her to love you once more. I beg you don't.

HENRY. What, shall I for your sake, and for that of your husband and the indefinite children, pass my days in single wretchedness?

ALICE (*bashfully*). No.

HENRY. No? Do you mean, then, that I shall go on loving you?

ALICE (*bashfully*). Yes.

HENRY. Well, this *is* a staggerer! But you know I ought not to love you. (ALICE *looks straight ahead. Aside.*) She's struggling with her emotions. (*Aloud.*) Pardon the suggestion, but it occurs to me that your husband might prove a slight obstacle to our happiness.

ALICE (*quickly*). Oh! only for a little while, a very little while.

HENRY (*aside*). I declare this coolness is amazing. (*Aloud.*) Then Mr. Norcross is in poor health?

ALICE. Oh, no! He's well enough. But that's no matter. Only have patience. Give me a little time.

HENRY. Patience? Yes. But I'll be shot if I see through this business. Now if you were only a widow —

ALICE. Ah! matters can change very much in twenty-four hours. Only have patience for four and twenty hours.

HENRY. Four and twenty hours! But tell me —

ALICE. Oh, I've said too much already! (*Mysteriously.*) Don't ask me any more questions. I'll soon be rid of my husband. (*Exit into No. 3.*)

HENRY. Well, I *am* in the dark, that's a fact. Get rid of him? Now if nature in the shape of apoplexy, or gout in the stomach, should step in to the rescue; but, confound it! the old fellow don't look it. Death is the lot of all. I suppose his turn will come some time — (*Starting.*) Great Heavens! suppose she intends to supply the place of nature. What did she say? "Rid of him," "Twenty-four hours." Yet she seems innocent and harmless as a dove. Innocuous as the rose or violet. Yet there are even flowers which are as deadly as beautiful. Why, now I think, the delicate and toothsome mushroom, the gentle truffle, is most nearly like the deadly toadstool. "Rid of him," "Four and twenty hours." (*Shudders.*) No. I'll fly to my Cousin Nellie. (*Enter MARY.* HENRY *takes up bags, etc.*)

MARY. Your room is ready now, sir.

HENRY. Don't want it. Going to leave.

MARY. What? So soon?

HENRY. See here, my dear, my hands are full. See if you can find a quarter in my vest pocket. (*Aside.*) I must try to save

the unhappy man. (*Aloud.*) Oh! (*Squirms.* MARY *takes out a quarter.*) See if you can't find another. (MARY *does it with same business.* MARY *laughs.*) Now hold on to them and listen. If Mr. Norcross wants anything to eat or drink, mind, you give him nothing — absolutely nothing. Say there isn't anything in the house.

MARY. What do you mean?

HENRY. At most, only a glass of water, nothing else.

MARY. But he'll starve to death.

HENRY. That's so; he may as well be poisoned as to starve to death. Let him have eggs then. Boiled eggs, and nothing else.

MARY. I won't do it. They would turn me out of the house.

HENRY. You won't? Then put back that money into my pocket.

MARY. You told me to hold on to it, and I'm going to.

(*Exit MARY laughing.*)

HENRY. Well, as a guardian angel she did not pan out very well. What shall I do? They'll suspect me of being an accessory before the fact. I see the storm gathering about my devoted head. I will fly — fly to the arms of my Uncle Jonas — and yet my love for this woman — I am bound to this spot, bound in calf as it were. Damn that calf! I wish I had never seen it. Stay, I must save this poor devil of a Norcross. Simply out of common humanity. (*Puts down his bundles. Takes out a pocket note-book and writes.*) Sir, your life is in danger. I beg of you to drink nothing, to eat nothing, unless it be eggs, eggs boiled, and these only when you have removed the shells yourself; signed, "A Friend of Humanity." (*Tears out leaf.*) Now how shall I get it to him? (*Looks around.*) Aha! his speech. (*Takes it.*) I'll put it in there. (*Does so.*) Now I hope to goodness he'll read that speech over again soon!

(*Enter NORCROSS C.*)

NOR. (*joyful*). Aha! my speech was just the thing. I had no idea what an impression it would make. Morse is just done for. Ha, ha, ha!

HENRY (*comes to him slowly and mysteriously*). Do you know, sir, that he who laughs before breakfast may cry before supper?

NOR. (*surprised*). What do you mean?

HENRY (*aside*). He does not look sick. (*Aloud.*) Sir, be frank with me. Tell me honestly, how do you feel?

NOR. First rate, first rate.

HENRY. Haven't you a pain anywhere? (*Feeling of him.*) Here for instance? Or here?

NOR. (*getting away*). No, sir; not a bit. (*Aside.*) What the deuce is he up to?

HENRY (*aside*). My suspicions are correct. (*Aloud.*) Really no pain? Here, perhaps? (*Feeling of his ribs.*)

NOR. (*getting away*). See here, sir, do I look like a gentleman?

HENRY. Why, of course; yes.

NOR. (*similar business as that with HEELER*). Well, sir, allow me to insinuate in a thoroughly respectful and gentlemanly manner that though I have had the pleasure of knowing you but a short time, I shall still feel at liberty, if you don't take your cursed sharp claws out of my ribs, to wring your infernal neck, you little sun of a gun!

HENRY (*astonished*). What! (*Milder*.) Ah, sir, if you only knew! Remember no one can read the book of Fate.

NOR. What's that to me?

HENRY (*pointing to MS.*). Rewrite that speech; rewrite that speech.

NOR. Well, this is the worst crank I have struck in my life.

HENRY. Well, long life to you, Norcross. Long life to you. *Do you hear?* You'll bear witness that I wished you a long life. (*Gathers bundles and takes hat.*)

NOR. (*uneasy*). See here. What do you mean? Is my life in danger?

HENRY (*sighs*). Poor devil! Well, I'll ease my conscience by voting for him. That will remove suspicions from *me*. Long life to you, Norcross.

NOR. (*stops him*). What do you mean?

HENRY (*mysteriously*). Rewrite your speech, unhappy man. Rewrite your speech. (*Exit C.*)

NOR. Now, what the dickens has he to do with my speech? He must be—

(*Enter C., HEELER, excited.*)

HEEL. Ten thousand furies!

NOR. What's the matter *now*?

HEEL. Everything is lost.

NOR. (*seeing HEELER's hat on his head*). Now, Heeler, without the slightest ill-will toward you, and entirely free from excitement, I beg most politely to inquire why in my presence you will persist in keeping that confounded greasy old hat on your miserable head? (*Kicks at him, and HEELER dodges.*) Take it off. Take it off. (*HEELER does so.*)

HEEL. You have made a frightful blunder in accepting that invitation to lunch at the Phillipses'.

NOR. What? Why? How so?

HEEL. Why, the people who are not invited are mad, and they'll vote against you.

NOR. The devil they will! Then I won't go to the Phillipses'.

HEEL. Then they'll be angry, and you'll lose their votes.

NOR. What can I do? I can't go and stay away too. If I was only twins.

HEEL. (*reflecting*). Ah! here's where your faithful Heeler comes

to the rescue. I have fixed it. I have found a way out of it
(*Calls.*) Mary! Mary! bring me some tea. (*Enter MARY.*)
Bring me some tea. (*Exit MARY.*)

NOR. Tea?

HEEL. I said you were ill, had been eating some mushrooms, and they had poisoned you. So you see the Phillipses can't be angry, and the others can't either.

NOR. Heeler, you are a trump, a regular right bower, as it were, a knave of trumps.

HEEL. Now you must play the invalid.

NOR. Of course. (*Takes off his coat; calls.*) Alice! Alice! Bring me my dressing-gown.

(*Enter from her room ALICE, who goes into his and brings gown.*)

ALICE. Dear me! what is the matter?

HEEL. Mr. Norcross is very ill.

NOR. Yes; I ate some mushrooms and they poisoned me.

ALICE. Oh, dear!

HEEL. Now I'll be off and circulate the story. (*Exit C.*)

NOR. Do I look very pale, my child?

ALICE. I can't say you do. Is there anything you want?

NOR. I only want to look pale. (*Sits in arm-chair near fireplace; takes tall pointed night-cap out of dressing-gown pocket; gives it to ALICE.*) Here, put on my night-cap for me, will you?

ALICE (*doing so*). Yes, yes; I'll do it. But, what is the matter with you, uncle dear?

NOR. Hush! "Dear Timothy," remember. It's nothing my child. It's only a kind of church headache, a sort of fever-de-lurk. But, my child, tell me something. I fear you use cosmetics on your skin. Powder and paint? eh? don't you?

ALICE (*aside*). Oh, dear! how did he ever find it out? (*Aloud.*) No, uncle, I never paint — really —

NOR. Nor powder? Truly, now, I know the facts.

ALICE. I have a little — just a wee little face-powder, uncle, just to keep away the chaps.

NOR. Keep away the chaps? Humph! I thought it was to draw them on. Never mind. Bring it to me.

ALICE. Yes, uncle — I mean Timothy. (*Exit in her room.*)

NOR. Ha! ha! As if I didn't know that every woman powders. It's just the thing to give me a sickly pallor.

(*Enter ALICE with powder and puff.*)

ALICE. Here's the powder.

NOR. (*takes it*). Oh! It is, is it? Humph! how do you use it? Make it into a paste, eh?

ALICE. Oh, no! Just put it on with this puff.

NOR. It must be very uncomfortable.

ALICE. Oh, no, it isn't.

NOR. I don't believe it. Let me see. Put some on me ; come, now.

ALICE (*reluctant*). O uncle !

NOR. Hush ! don't call me uncle. Come, now ; put it on, Alice.

ALICE. Well, I suppose I must. (*Powders his face.*)

NOR. Put on more ; I do not feel it. (*ALICE puts on a lot.*) There, that's more like it. That'll do.

ALICE. There, you see it is not bad. (*Goes to wipe it off.*)

NOR. Here. Let it alone. It may grow to feel bad after a time. I must try it. (*ALICE puts box on table and, looking at NORCROSS, laughs.*)

ALICE. Ha ! ha ! ha ! How funny you look with your white cap and your white face !

HENRY (*appearing at door*). There, I've voted for him. My conscience is so much lighter.

NOR. (*seeing HENRY*). Hulloo ! my lunatic again.

HENRY (*seeing ALICE laughing*). Why this mirth ?

ALICE (*with difficulty suppressing laughter*). Oh ! It is nothing — only Mr. Norcross is ill.

HENRY (*coming forward alarmed*). Heavens ! and you can laugh ?

NOR. (*groans*). Oh ! Ah ! Um !

HENRY (*seeing NORCROSS' face for the first time*). Great Heavens ! The deed already done ! (*Going to him.*) You appear to be ill, sir.

NOR. Oh, yes. I was so imprudent as to eat some mushrooms.

HENRY (*excited*). 'Tis done. Truffles, I mean trifles, light as air are confirmations strong as proofs from holy writ. Oh, why did you not rewrite your speech ?

NOR. Now, what the devil have you to do with my speech ?

HENRY (*to ALICE reproachfully*). O madam ! Mushrooms ! How could you ? Mushrooms !

(*Enter MARY with teapot.*)

MARY. Here's the hot water ; I will bring the tea directly.

ALICE. Never mind, I have some in my room.

MARY (*going to NORCROSS*). Poor man, shall I go for a doctor ?

ALICE (*hastily*). No ! No ! It is not necessary. Go.

(*Exit MARY.*)

HENRY (*aside*). She will have no doctor. It's as clear as day. (*To ALICE.*) O Mrs Norcross !

ALICE. You here again ? Help me make this tea. (*Feeling in satchel.*)

HENRY (*helping*). Madam, I conjure you in the name of your three children, Thomas, Richard, and Henry, — or was it John James ? — now away at school, stop in this awful — (*Taking book out of satchel, where he has been looking for tea.*) What is this ?

ALICE (*hastily*). Put it down; put it down; don't let him see it. Ah! Here is the tea. (*Taking out small tin box.*)

HENRY. Not let it be seen? Another secret. (*Crosses to front and opens book; reads.*) "The Poisoned Violet." Ah, poison, poison everywhere. (*Throws book on table.* ALICE, who has been drawing the tea, brings up a little table and takes a cup to NORCROSS.)

ALICE. Here, Timothy dear, here's the tea.

HENRY (*aside*). Heavens! She means to finish him off at once; the mushrooms are too slow.

NOR. Thank you, my dear; thank you. (*Groans.*)

ALICE (*after pouring tea*). I'll be back directly. (*Exit into her room.* NORCROSS takes up cup; blows in it.)

NOR. Ah! That will do me good. (*About to drink.*)

HENRY (*rushes to him*). Hold, sir; do not drink that.

NOR. Eh? (*Drinks.*) Why not? (*HENRY grabs cup away.*)

HENRY. He has swallowed it. Oh, why didn't you rewrite your speech? Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

NOR. Now, what the deuce is the matter with my speech?

HENRY (*aside*). Now I am implicated sure. That note will show that I knew of the plot. How can I get out of it? (*Walks about nervously.*)

NOR. (*watching him*). What are you rushing about in that way for?

HENRY (*seeing milk*). Ah, my milk! I remember a poisoned cat that was saved by milk. (*Pours some into NORCROSS's cup.*)

NOR. Here, what the dickens are you doing? I don't take milk in my tea.

HENRY. I can't help it, you must take milk in your tea. (*NORCROSS takes up speech; note falls out.*)

NOR. (*picks it up and reads*). What's this? "Your life is in danger. Eat nothing; drink nothing."

HENRY (*offering cup*). Drink, drink! I wrote it.

NOR. Ha! Ha! Trying to scare me, eh? Ha! Ha! You don't fool me; I know better.

HENRY. He laughs. He actually laughs. Heavens! how pale he is, and he sits there and laughs, with one foot in the tea, — I mean the grave, — he laughs. Oh, that that hot water was out of him and I out of this hot water! (*Pause.*) I must prove my innocence. (*NORCROSS is about to prepare another cup of tea.*) Here, give me that! (*Grabs the tin box.*)

NOR. Here, here, what are you doing? That's my tea. (*Holds on to it.*)

HENRY (*pulling at it*). Let me have it.

NOR. I'll be hanged if I do!

HENRY. And I'll be hanged if you don't. Give it here. (*Gets it away.*) There's a chemist next door. I'll have it analyzed and prove that I am innocent. (*Exit hastily with can.*)

NOR. That chap is as mad as a March hare.

(Enter C., HEELER, and from her room, ALICE.)

HEEL. (*excited*). Victory! victory!

NOR. What is it?

HEEL. The polls are closed, and you are elected.

NOR. (*seeing HEELER'S hat*). My dear Heeler, you probably are aware that I value my reputation for gentlemanly conduct above everything, and therefore (*gradually getting excited*), if you don't haul off that miserable old squash from your idiotic old head, I'll smash this cup on the vacuum that passes for a head with you.

HEEL. (*removes hat*). You are elected by a majority of one.

NOR. Whew! That was close.

HEEL. Yes. Rather. Young Mason's vote did it. Every one thought he would vote for his uncle.

ALICE. We are under great obligations to him, aren't we?

NOR. We are indeed, and I am to you, my child. Now you are free again. (*Laughing*.) In fact, you are a widow, having just lost a husband.

ALICE (*laughing*). To say nothing of three children.

NOR. (*laughs*). Ha! ha! Now what do you want? Sealskin? Piano? What?

ALICE (*bashful*). No. I — I —

HEEL. (*at window*). Quick! Put on your coat.

NOR. Why?

HEEL. The boys are coming to congratulate you. (*Helps him on with coat*.)

NOR. Oh! The dear public. The free and enlightened constituency. They must be attended to. (*Puts on coat. ALICE dusts his face with his night-cap*.) I'll have to give them the same speech over again. Never mind. A good speech ought to go twice. By, by, dear. Come, Heeler. (*Exeunt C.*)

ALICE. Thank goodness it is all over! It was so perfectly horrid to have Mr. Mason call me Mrs. Norcross. I wouldn't mind being Mrs., but not Norcross. Now I can tell him, and what a laugh we'll have, poor fellow! He seemed to feel so bad when he found that I was married. How happy he'll be when I tell him!

(Enter HENRY, hat down over his eyes, tea in his hand, melodramatic.)

HENRY. I have had it analyzed. The chemist found a grain and a half of chloride of sodium in it.

ALICE. How he looks! (HENRY glares at her.) Mr. Mason, don't look at me in that way.

HENRY. Sodium, madam! Sodium! Chloride of sodium; Madam, away; leave me.

ALICE. And I had such news to tell you, such happy news!

HENRY (*still melodramatic*). Well, what is it?

ALICE. I am free at last.

HENRY. And your husband?

ALICE. I have none. He is out of the way forever. (*Laughs.*) I am a widow, as you wished.

HENRY (*drops can; hat falls from his head as he starts in horror*). Widow? Then it is all over! (*Groans.*)

ALICE. Well! You don't seem overjoyed, I must say.

HENRY. Overjoyed? Yes; overjoyed that I had no share in this business. O woman, have you a heart of stone? Do you think there is no hereafter? Oh! why did I not go at once to my cousin.

ALICE. Why, Mr. Mason! Don't be angry with me for a little joke.

HENRY. Joke! She calls that a little joke. So cool too. I suppose, madam, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew appears to you something in the light of a comic almanac.

ALICE. I don't understand you at all.

HENRY. I tremble for you, not only in this world, but in the next.

ALICE. And yet this morning you were so bold with that bull.

HENRY. Bull? No, I can confess it now, it was no bull. It was only a playful calf. (*Noise outside.*)

ALICE. What a dreadful noise!

HENRY (*starts*). Ha! What if the crime is already discovered! Yet, there is still time. Fly, madam; fly! (*Tries to pull her off L.*)

ALICE. Let me alone! You seem to have lost your mind. You'd better be bled, or have a shower-bath.

HENRY. Unhappy woman, fly, or you are lost. I have been to the chemist. Fly, woman!

ALICE (*beginning to cry*). He calls me "woman."

HENRY. I loved you. Ay, love you still, though I ought to hate you. I will save you from the maddened crowd. Here, take my cloak, my hat. (*Trying to force them on her.*)

ALICE. Let me be! I think you are just horrid, there! Leave me alone!

HENRY. In Heaven's name take my cloak or you are lost!

(*Enter C., NORCROSS and HEELER.*)

NOR. What enthusiasm! What a reception I got! Eh?

HENRY (*puzzled*). Norcross himself! Sir, are you alive? Yes, you are alive; that is, you look alive. (*Feels of him.* NORCROSS *squirms.*) Yes, very much alive.

ALICE. Protect me from this man, uncle.

HENRY. What! Uncle?

NOR. Yes; uncle. I advise you to go and be bled. It'll do you good. But how do you know my niece? Can this be the young man who saved you—

ALICE. Me from the calf? Yes.

HENRY. No! No! It was a bull—a raving, roaring, rearing,

tearing, red-eyed, sharp-horned bull. (*Manner quite changed.*) Oh, if you only knew!

ALICE (*retreating*). Keep away from me.

HENRY (*to NORCROSS*). It was a bull, sir; in fact, it seems to be all a bull; but now — (*Strikes attitude as in earlier scene.*) Respected sir, not without diffidence do I venture —

NOR. Chestnut. I've heard that before.

HENRY. Your niece is the personification of all that is good and lovely and —

ALICE. He seems to be getting a little more rational now.

NOR. Well, well, what is it that you “not without diffidence venture”?

HENRY (*takes HEELER'S hat and assumes attitude*). Sir, I don't understand what is going on here, but I make bold to ask for the hand of your niece. (*NORCROSS is silent.*) It was a bull I assure you. (*Earnestly.*)

NOR. But (*to ALICE*) I only promised you a sack!

ALICE. Well, I want this *muff* to go with the sack.

HEEL. And I my post-office.

NOR. You shall have it. (*HEELER gets his hat; throws it up for joy and puts it on his head.*) And you, sir, may have my niece. She has made me a very satisfactory wife to-day, and I can guarantee she'll nurse you well if you ever get ill from eating mushrooms. Ha! Ha!

HENRY (*taking ALICE by the hand*). Then, my dear, since it is no longer unlawful, I'll love you from now on forever. We'll live on love —

ALICE (*naïve*). And mushrooms?

NOR. (*observing the hat on HEELER*). Now, Heeler, as to that hat, allow me in the politest and most gentlemanly — (*HEELER grabs off hat at beginning of speech, which is cut off by quick curtain as NORCROSS is beginning to get excited.*)

A NEW BORDER DRAMA.

RIO GRANDE.

AN ORIGINAL DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

By **CHARLES TOWNSEND.**

Author of "The Spy of Gettysburg," "The Woven Web," "Border Land," "Broken Fetters," etc., etc.

Seven male, four female characters. Modern costumes; scenery, one interior and one exterior. Time in playing, two hours and twenty minutes.

This is the latest play of Western life, and one of the finest dramas ever written by this brilliant and successful author. Its interest is unflagging, it is full of bright, clean fun, and roaring comedy situations alternate with thrilling and pathetic scenes. Every character is a good one and worthy of the best talent. This piece can be played in any hall or upon any stage, as there are no difficulties in costumes or scenery. Printed directly from the author's acting copy, and preceded by a chapter of "Remarks" in which are given, in the author's own words, special instructions regarding the play, the acting of each part, and all necessary details of stage-management.

Price, . . . 25 Cents.

SYNOPSIS:

ACT I. THE FIRST DAY. — Sitting-room at Lawton's. Judge Biggs renders an opinion. Casey in doubt. Segura fails to score. Paul and Ketta. Jealousy. The arrival. Maupé and the Judge. Trouble ahead. A threatened quarrel. The proposal. Refused. "Answer him nothing." The vow. Tableau.

ACT II. THE SECOND DAY. — The lawn near the parade ground. The holiday soldier. Johnnie in trouble. An "American aristocrat" Cadwallader frightened. Biggs indignant. The Indian outbreak. Segura's plan. A cunning plot. The marriage certificate. Paul and Ketta. Some clever acting. Segura's triumph. The quarrel. A broken engagement. "Bravo and saddles!" Biggs as a guide. "I won't cry." The departure. Tableau.

ACT III. THE THIRD DAY. — Sitting-room at Lawton's. The anxious waiters. Ketta's sorrow. The new friends. Cadwallader's mishap. Maupé's sympathy. "Thanks awfully." Biggs arrives. A roaring row. Cadwallader's resolution. Segura's cunning. Home again. Ketta's confession. Laying the train. "He has a wife already." Paul in trouble. Ketta explains the mine. Paul in danger. Death of Ketta. Finish.



AN ENTIRE NOVEL

THE GREAT MORAL DIME SHOW

AN ENTERTAINMENT IN ONE SCENE.

By MARY B. HORNE,

Author of "THE PEAK SISTERS," PROF. BAXTER'S GREAT INVENTION,
"THE BOOK OF DRILLS," "THE CARNIVAL OF DAYS,"
"PLANTATION BITTERS," ETC.

Nine male, seven female characters. Costumes simple; scenery an ordinary interior, or may be dispensed with altogether. Plays from half an hour upward, according to the number and character of additional specialties introduced. Printed exactly as first performed by the Unity Club, Watertown, Mass., on Friday evening, February 5, 1892.

This most amusing entertainment is a burlesque of the ordinary "dime-museum," so-called, but is entirely devoid of the vulgarity of its original, and perfectly adapted to church or home performance. The characters are, save the lecturer and her assistant, a wonderful collection of "freaks" of nature (somewhat assisted by art) who sing, dance or recite, according to their special abilities, in illustration of the explanatory lecture. It is most elastic in its requirements, can be played on any stage or platform, with or without scenery, and with a greater or smaller number of characters, according to taste or necessity. It can be made uproariously funny, and is in character as well as fact.

A SEQUEL TO THE PEAK SISTERS.

Price, - - - 15 Cents.

SYNOPSIS.

SCENE.—The exhibition hall of Sister Keziah's Show. Sister Keziah's introductory lecture. Johnathan, the bashful assistant. Introductory hymn. Introduction of the "freaks." DANIEL MC GINTY *redivivus*. Daniel's song. LUCIA ZARATE, the celebrated Mexican dwarf. KIERO, the shortest man alive, *not financially*. The wonderful MERMAID. The Mermaid's song. CASSIUS WHITE, the ossified boy. A "rocky" recitation. KALLULO, the only specimen of his kind in captivity; illustrated by cuts. SINGON GAZAR, the celebrated Glass-Eater. Galassi song. ALLEGRO PENSEROSO, the wonderful two-headed girl; not to be confounded with the more common two-faced girl. Two ways of eating a pickle. IDA and IONE, the thirteen maidens. RAYHAEL TINCORET, the blind painter, who paints blind in full view of the audience. AH CHIN and WUN LUNG, the Chinese twins, extremely well connected from birth. "The Land of Tea." KA-ROOKEE-KEE, the Turkish vocalist. Grand finale and curtain.